

Public Information and Education Division

Since 1931, the Missouri State Highway Patrol has considered educating the public to be one of its responsibilities. In the mid-1930s, the high accident toll experienced in Missouri led to the Patrol's establishing a Safety Department. This department would eventually become the Traffic Division of today. But prior to 1953, and the creation of the Public Information Office, the Safety Department filled the dual role of gathering statistics *and* promoting safety education.

At the same time the Safety Department was formed, a member was sent to Northwestern University to study the problems of traffic and safety. A campaign started "to educate the driver in safe driving practices and traffic regulations". Troopers went into schools and to civic groups to teach the traffic laws and safety. "Motion pictures of safe driving" were used to teach the public.

The first safety program, adopted by the Patrol in 1935, stressed careful driving and strict adherence to the rules of the road. In 1937, the first safety officers were named. In 1940, the Safety Squadron was formed. This group toured the state working traffic by selective enforcement and promoting traffic safety. The squadron included 13 white motorcycles, one white Ford coupe with a house trailer, four white panel trucks, and two white coaches. Members of the squadron had radio communications with one another and the nearest troop headquarters.

"I think the Safety Squadron was one of the best things the Patrol ever did. Not because I was part of it, but the way they did it," said retired Sergeant Tom W. Pasley in a 2005 interview. "The 'little general' Captain Bob Moore took care of the squadron. He was the brains behind it. We could only ride the white safety squadron motorcycles when we were together as a squadron. The little general knew a lot of people, and got us those motorcycles. AAA was always out there with us. There were 10 of us, the 'little general', and he had two sergeants--13 total.

Each of us worked a two-mile stretch. We did a lot of good--stopping people for every little thing. If a taillight had a chip in it, we stopped them. They probably didn't know about it. We just talked to them, wrote them a warning, and sent them on their way. You pull into town with 13 white motorcycles, and people just stand and stare at you."

By the early 1940s, the Patrol had assigned a safety officer to each troop. The 1945-1947 biennial report indicated the safety officers were assigned to the Safety Division. This division also included a central accident record bureau. The safety officers presented safety programs in their area. The Safety Department continued to track safety officer activities and have some interaction with them. In the early part of 1944, the Patrol worked with several other state agencies in

sponsoring the first high school driver education program in Missouri. Safety officers continued working closely with area schools. According to a 1966 annual report, safety officers helped inspect 6,000 school buses. That year, they also conducted 90 driver improvement schools for Missouri drivers.

But, it wasn't until 1953 that the Patrol created a Public Information Department within the Division of Safety and Administration. While the Safety Department retained the responsibility of the safety officers, this new department was given the responsibility of creating and distributing educational materials. The Public Information department was tasked with compiling the annual report and other reports required as to the activities of the Patrol.

The Public Information Department would be known by several names throughout the Patrol's history. In the late 1950s, it would be the Public Information Office. In the 1960s, this office was referred to as the Public Information and Education Section. For most of the 1970s, it was called the Public Information Section. But, in 1979, the title Safety Education and Information Division was adopted. 1983 and 1984 found this area known as the Public Information Division. For about three years in the late 1980s, this function was combined with research and known as the Research and Information Division. The division would be split into two functions in 1989, with the Safety and Information Division focusing on educating the public, specific reports, and the safety officer duties. The division's last name change occurred in 1991, when it adopted the name it carries today--Public Information and Education Division.

The safety officers were part of the Safety Division (Traffic Division of today) from 1946 through 1978. In 1979, the safety officers were reassigned to the Safety Education and Information Division. The change from one division to the other took place again in 1981, when the safety officers were reassigned to the Traffic Division. This would change for the last time in 1989, when they were assigned to the Research and Information Division. When that division was split into two separate functions--the Research Division and the Public Information and Education Division--the safety officers became public information and education officers--which is how they are known today--assigned to the latter area. In 1972, the Public Information Office moved to its current location.

In 1976, a Photographic Unit was established in the Traffic Division. According to a 1978 annual report, this unit was very busy. The unit printed 19,400 photographs that year. This unit would be placed under the Crime Laboratory, then the Budget and Procurement Division, before being permanently assigned to the Public Information and Education Division in 2004. According to 2006 statistics, the photo laboratory printed 34,241 pictures from film, and printed 34,223 digital pictures.

The responsibilities of the Public Information and Education Division (PIED) have been education and creating necessary reports since it was formed. Over the years, as a staff artist was hired (1967) and technology advanced, more duties were assigned to this division.

Media Announcements

As early as a 1959-1960 Missouri Manual, the "dissemination of releases and articles concerning traffic safety and activities of the Patrol through the media ..." was expected. The division also prepared safety pamphlets, folders, books, and other material in the promotion of traffic safety. The same manual indicated "articles consisting of more than 130,000 words yearly are prepared ..."

News releases and public service announcements are still a vital role of PIED. Until 1999, these were sent to print media, radio, and television stations throughout Missouri via The Link, a wire service in Iowa Falls, IA; News Net, a wire service linked through MULES; U.S. mail; and fax machine. In 1999, the Patrol formed a partnership with Learfield Communications and began posting all news releases on Learfield's web site, while continuing to use The Link, MULES, and U.S. postal service. In 2000, the Patrol discontinued use of The Link and U.S. mail. The public information specialist sent postcards to every media outlet in the state requesting e-mail addresses, and mailing groups were created in Lotus Notes. Thus, e-mail and posting news releases on the Learfield Communications' web site became the distribution method.

Media Campaigns

In the late 1960s, the division began issuing "media cards". These press cards identified the bearer as a member of the media; they did not give security clearance. In 1971, 1,500 press cards were issued. Although press cards are still issued, the demand for them has decreased. Less than 1,000 press cards were issued for 2006.

A "practice courtesy" campaign was launched in 1970. Five hundred billboards placed throughout the state urged drivers to practice courtesy. The Missouri Outdoor Advertising Association provided the billboards as a public service. In addition, special, informational materials were distributed to the media about this campaign.

Each year, from 1970 to 1973, a special color slide was created and disseminated to all Missouri television stations. The slide contained a traffic safety message and was presented to the public by television stations.

Some of the media campaigns created by the Public Information and Education Division through the years include:

- "Everyone Has A Future In Safe Driving" (1971)
- "Safe Driving Begins With A Safe Vehicle" (1972)
- "Slow Down-- Save Gas" (1973)
- "Emergency Help CB Channel 9" (1975-76)
- "Drive 55 -- Why Not?" (1977)

In 1986, country singer Jeanne Pruitt recorded traffic safety messages. Six years later, in 1992, the Oak Ridge Boys appeared in Branson, Missouri, to promote the "Buckle Up Missouri" campaign. The Missouri Division of Highway Safety sponsored the country music group taking part in this event. The public service announcements were released statewide.

In 1979, a place mat was designed and produced. This colorful item displayed information on traffic safety and first aid. It was distributed to restaurants throughout the state.

Two special video projects were created in 1983. The first coincided with the current media campaign entitled "If You Drink And Drive In Missouri, We'll Show You Some New Bars". The second video was for use in the Safety Education Center. This video explained how our personnel use the Patrol's computer system to identify stolen cars and/or wanted criminals on the highways.

Three public service announcements were recorded onto video in 1984. Two announcements addressed child safety restraints and one dealt with the importance of wearing seat belts. These announcements were given to all Missouri television stations.

1-800-525-5555 (New emergency number, 1988)

Project Help (Salvation Army assisting motorists, 1989)

"Do you know your limit? We do!" (late 1980s)

"Buckle Your Bod!" (early 1990s)

"YOBUI!" (You Otto Buckle Up! 1995)

"Fatal Choices" (with video, 1996)

Buckle Up! Life Jackets and Seat Belts Save Lives! (A joint effort of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Missouri State Water Patrol, and Missouri State Highway Patrol in 1999.)

"Click It Or Ticket" (beginning in 2003)

"Stop the Knock" (with video, 2001)

"It's My Life" (with video, 2005)

Throughout its existence, PIED has helped coordinate news conferences on subjects important to the Patrol and the citizens of Missouri. Topics of these news conferences have included Operation Cashcrop (86), Operation C.A.R.E. (numerous years), Buckle Up America (1998), Missouri legislation (numerous years), and most recently, the 2006 federal methamphetamine legislation. At the most recent news conference, Senator Jim Talent spoke about the passing of federal meth legislation, which was inspired by similar legislation passed in Missouri a year earlier.

Publications

Over the years, the division has been tasked with brochures on a variety of subjects. Topics range from bicycle safety, personal safety, driving safety, and crime prevention to recruiting and Patrol services. These brochures are available to the public free-of-charge. In 1978, booklets of safety games and puzzles were created for the first time. Updated over the years, these types of publications are popular with children. Coloring books have also been created.

The Public Information and Education Division is also responsible for coordinating the publication of an annual report each year. Divisions and troops submit information pertinent to their areas. PIED employees assemble it into one report and are responsible for its distribution.

An official publication entitled *Patrol News* was prepared and sent to each employee of the Patrol beginning in July 1966. This monthly magazine kept personnel informed as to what happens in the department. In 2004, due to rising costs, the *Patrol News* became a bi-monthly publication. A special section of the *Patrol News* was created for the July/August 2006 issue. The insert was 12 pages in length, included its own front cover, and contained only stories related to law enforcement memorial events in Missouri and Washington, D.C. This insert was found in the middle of the issue and designed so it could be printed as its own publication if needed.

The Patrol has celebrated many years of service and protection. At the direction of the superintendent, a division has been tasked with creating a yearbook to mark special anniversaries of the Patrol. Yearbooks have been created in 1963, 1971, 1981, 1987, 1991, 1996, 2001, and 2006. Since 1981, PIED has been charged with creating and distributing the yearbooks. The Patrol's 75th anniversary provided a variety of additional projects for PIED. In 2006, in addition to a yearbook, the division was responsible for updating and printing the Patrol's history, and creating a book containing interviews with retirees entitled *To Serve and Protect*. Also, for the first time, the Patrol's history included a section entitled, "Roll Call" with tributes to the 27 officers killed in the line of duty since the Patrol's creation.

In 1995, the AAMAVA Public Affairs and Consumer Education Competition Region III recognized the division. PIED was named a winner in the electronic communication category for its "Executive Summary". This electronic report included news briefs on the various divisions at General Headquarters. It was discontinued in 2000.

In 1998, PIED employees designed a "punch-out patrol car" and K-9 trading cards. These giveaway items are given to children visiting the Safety Education Center and those attending programs presented by PIOs.

Displays and Museums

Displays are one way the Patrol has educated the public on a variety of issues. As early as the Missouri State Fair in 1956, the Patrol had a "talking car" exhibit. This was the forerunner of "Otto--The Talking Car". It consisted of a face

placed in front of a 1956 Ford patrol car. A spinning wheel with traffic safety questions was used in conjunction with the talking vehicle. The car would answer the questions on the wheel. This vehicle had long lips, large eyes and eyebrows, and wore a large, black hat. The eyes moved horizontally and the upper lip moved up and down. This display lasted four years, until deterioration of the hat material forced an end to its career.

At the 1961 State Fair, safety officers used the SAF-T-VAC exhibit to talk to the public about safety. In 1966, the Patrol purchased an 18-foot commercially built exhibit trailer to take to fairs and events. This trailer acquainted people with the Patrol and served as a way to attract qualified individuals to seek employment. This trailer was followed by a custom made 10-foot, self-contained exhibit, which could be used at smaller functions involving less space.

A custom-built 10 by 50 foot mobile education exhibit became part of the Patrol's display facilities in 1967. The exhibit was taken to many fairs and special events throughout the state. The exhibit informed the public about the services performed by the Patrol and various safety topics. Hundreds of thousands of people visited the exhibit that year.

A new exhibit, "Otto -- The Talking Car" was introduced at the State Fair in 1969. Otto's face was oval and he wore a campaign style hat. His eyes close/open, his door opens, his horn honks, his wheels turn, and his lower lip moves as he speaks. Thousands of people talked to Otto about safety each year. When Otto wasn't at the fair, he was housed at General Headquarters. In 1982, Otto was placed in the Patrol's Safety Education Center. He still travels to the Missouri State Fair each year.

A new Patrol display trailer became operational in 1974. This trailer was made available to troops for fairs and other group events. Topics on display included recruit training, trooper activities, and some historical information.

The Missouri State Highway Patrol Museum opened in 1973. This first Safety Education Center was located in two rooms in the south wing of the Waggoner Building at General Headquarters. Displays about transportation, history of law enforcement and the Patrol, and safety topics were part of this museum. Twelve additional exhibits were added to the center in 1974. It was closed in December 1980.

In 1982, the current Safety Education Center opened its doors. Located in the basement of the Waggoner Building, this center includes retired patrol vehicles, information on various divisions and the Patrol's history, and interactive displays on a variety of safety topics. A display of the agency's fallen heroes adorns one wall. Groups scheduling a tour are also invited to watch an age appropriate safety video. Over 13,000 visitors come to the center each year.

In 1985, the Missouri Division of Highway Safety presented a battery-powered robot to the Patrol. The troop safety officers use this robot throughout the state. The robot wears a campaign hat.

Rollover simulators designed and built by employees in the Patrol's Motor Equipment Division were assigned to public information and education officers beginning in 1993. These were assigned to every PIEO by the late 1990s. The current rollover is a pickup truck cab on a trailer. Dummies in the cab help show the importance of using seat belts. When the officer turns on the rollover, the cab spins, simulating a rollover in a vehicle. Without seat belts, the dummies fly out of the cab; with seat belts, they remain secure within. This display remains popular in 2006.

The Mobile Safety Education Center debuted at the Missouri State Fair in August 1998. This education trailer was the result of private donations from a number of companies. The center, a 40-foot sport trailer, was handicap accessible and reminds people of the importance of safety--bicycling, walking, driving, railroad, seat belt, etc.--through a variety of displays. This trailer was used at events throughout the state until its retirement in 2005.

In 1999, the 1959 Dodge patrol car was taken out of the Safety Education Center, repaired, and sent out on the road. A popular attraction at the Missouri State Fair, this patrol car can be seen in parades throughout the state. It remains a good public relations tool in 2006.

PIED helped coordinate the acquisition of nine "convincers" for the Patrol. The "convincer" simulates a five-mile-per-hour crash, showing the occupant how seat belts can help protect people. The Coalition for Roadway Safety, working in conjunction with the Missouri Safety Center at Central Missouri State University, purchased the "convincers". The "convincer" is manufactured by AMI at Kansas State University. By August 2006, public information and education officers at all nine troops had a "convincer" in their possession.

Awards

The Public Information and Education Division is responsible for coordinating the Patrol's Annual Awards Ceremony, which began in 1991. Certificates, plaques, and medals are created each year for award recipients. In 1993, the Patrol's awards ceremony was joined with The MASTERS annual meeting, allowing members of The MASTERS to share in congratulating those employees and retirees recognized. Types of awards presented included Citation of Valor, Meritorious Service Award, Lifesaving Award, Memorial Award, Officer of the Year Award (added in 1998), Civilian of the Year Award (added in 2002), and the Purple Heart Award (first presented in 2005).

The division also fills requests for promotion certificates, work recognition awards, certificates of appreciation, and Honorary Trooper awards.

Programs

Since the creation of a public information and education division, the director of the section coordinated national programs at the state level and acted as a liaison between the Patrol and Missouri Safety Council, other state agencies, and civic groups. Officers have assisted with Missouri Boys State, Missouri Girls State, Operation Lifesaver (Trooper on the Train), Trooper On A School Bus, Share-A-Bear (in cooperation with Shoney's Incorporated), D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) from 1989-1992, when the program transferred to the Training Division, etc.

The division disseminated information concerning the S.T.E.P. (Statewide Traffic Enforcement Program) and Operation C.A.R.E (Combined Accident Reduction Effort) awareness programs beginning in 1981. Since that time, the Patrol has been actively involved in both. Members of the Patrol have served Operation C.A.R.E. by accepting positions on the executive board. Missouri hosted the national Operation C.A.R.E. conference in Branson, MO, in 1997.

From 1996 through 1998, the Patrol sponsored a Boy Scout Crime Prevention Program each year. Participating units looked at their community and designed crime prevention programs. These programs were submitted to a committee charged with selecting the winning programs. Winners traveled to General Headquarters with Patrol members from their area for a tour, demonstrations, to present their program, and for a banquet.

In 1997, the Patrol joined the Division of Highway Safety in the National Buckle Up America campaign. This program stressed the importance of wearing a safety belt. The division coordinated a media event at Troop H, St. Joseph, to promote this program.

Public information and education officers have visited schools and civic groups throughout the Patrol's history. Programs of all types remain available to groups. During Colonel Fred M. Mills term as superintendent, town hall meetings were held. These "meetings" were open and free to the public. Local officers assisted safety officers in answering questions after a slide presentation. Town hall meetings were held throughout the state.

In 1999, Troop D presented a "Community Alliance Program" to the public. This new public relations program was similar to a citizens' academy. Participants become more familiar with Patrol operations and procedures through classroom training, practical exercises, and personal interaction with Patrol employees. Beginning in 2000, Community Alliance Programs have been held in every troop biennially.

Since its inception in 1985, the Patrol has supported the Law Enforcement Torch Run. Currently, the director of PIED coordinates volunteers to run in the Torch Run and the sale of Torch Run T-Shirts to help raise money for Missouri's Special Olympians. Each division and troop selects a representative to serve as sales coordinator for its area. The director also helps coordinate volunteers to attend the games and assist in presenting medals to athletes.

Uniformed Safety Education Officer Workshop

Since the late 1960s, troopers from around the country have gathered for the Uniformed Safety Education Officer Workshop. This workshop is an opportunity to share safety presentations and ideas. Officers compete by presenting a safety program or public service announcement (television and radio) to the attendees. Each state has one vote to determine the winner. In addition to the competitions and networking, each host plans activities in the evening to highlight their geographical area.

Missouri (PIED) hosted the USEOW for the first time in 1971. At that time, the conference was held at the Patrol's Law Enforcement Academy, at General Headquarters, Jefferson City, MO.

In June 1988, Missouri hosted the 21st annual USEOW, held May 15-19, in Branson, MO. The Patrol welcomed 139 officers from 19 states and the province of Ontario.

In 1995, the Patrol's public information and education officers took second place at the USEOW held in San Antonio, Texas. (According to the *Patrol News* article at the time, the first place state--Alabama--took the award by a narrow margin, and "We were robbed.")

Missouri hosted this conference again in 1998, when it was held in St. Louis. Seventeen state police/patrol agencies sent 76 officers. During the conference retired Sergeant Ron Jones was voted into the USEOW Hall of Fame.

After Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf states, Mississippi asked the Missouri/Kansas team to take over hosting the 2006 USEOW. In six months, the two organizations planned the conference, which took place in June at the Great Wolf Lodge in Kansas. One hundred fifty-two people from 18 states attended.

Public Information and Education Division Directors

Capt. Jay T. "Tim" Hull, 2006 to
Capt. Christian T. Ricks, 2000 to 2006
Capt. James G. Watson, 1997 to 2000
Capt. Clarence A. Greeno, 1993 to 1997
Captain Charles R. Jackson, 1992 to 1993
Sgt. Terry W. Moore, 1991 to 1992
Lt. Ernest G. McCutchen, 1989 1991
Sgt./Lt./Capt. Ralph G. Biele, 1977 to 1989
Lt. Alvin R. Lubker, 1966 to 1977
Lt. F.W. Shadwell, 1953 to 1965